

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNO #0217/01 1761426
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 241426Z JUN 08
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO RHMFISS/USNMR SHAPE BE IMMEDIATE
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2004
RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV PRIORITY 0115
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 5991
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000217

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/18/2018
TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: APRIL 16-17 NAC VISIT TO UKRAINE

REF: KYIV 1144

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Richard G. Olson. Reasons:
1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: During its June 16-17 visit to Ukraine, the North Atlantic Council found a Ukrainian leadership team--President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of the Rada, as well as the Foreign and Defense Ministers--united on achieving a positive decision on Kyiv's application to join NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) when Allied Foreign Ministers meet in December. Stressing that MAP should not be conflated with actual membership, they acknowledged that the Ukrainian public was not yet supportive of membership. On the other hand, they stressed that there was time to turn this around before the public would be asked to decide on the membership issue through a referendum. The leaders also stressed that while they wanted a constructive relationship with Russia, Russia should not be given a veto over Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration. During their meeting with members of the Rada, PermReps heard dissenting voices from the Party of the Regions and the Lytvyn Bloc--although Regions leader (and former PM) Yanukovych did not show. PermReps were confronted with more extreme views during outreach trips to the regions, with those traveling to Kharkiv hearing Communists blame NATO for the wars in Iraq and Vietnam, as well as for the bombing of innocent civilians in Yugoslavia. PermReps were generally consistent in their public messaging, stressing that Ukraine needed to implement an effective public information campaign regarding NATO and that NATO was not going to try to force reluctant Ukrainians into the Alliance. They also thanked Ukraine for its continued contributions to NATO operations, while urging continued progress along the path of reform. While some Allies were forward leading with regard to a positive decision on MAP in December, Germany seemed to be trying to walk back from the decisions reached by NATO Heads of State and Government at their April 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, at least in discussions with the Ukrainian Government. END SUMMARY.

Ukrainian Leadership: United and On Message

2. (C) NATO Permanent Representatives began their April 16-17 visit to Ukraine by meeting with President Yushchenko and the National Security and Defense Council. Unexpectedly--and in a clear attempt to show unity on the NATO question--Prime Minister Tymoshenko and Rada Speaker Yatsenyuk were also present at this meeting. Yatsenyuk arrived late, coming from a meeting of parliamentary speakers from Poland and

Lithuania. Yushchenko said that Ukraine was on an irreversible course to Euro-Atlantic integration. Tymoshenko echoed this point, arguing that for the first time since Ukrainian independence 17 years before all three branches of government were united on the need to pursue the Euro-Atlantic path. Noting that Ukraine had declared its independence six times in the 20th Century only to lose it five times, the President said that the GOU saw NATO membership as a way to secure Ukrainian democracy, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. To reinforce the urgency of this point, he pointed to the continuing disputes with Russia over the Black Sea Fleet and Tuzla Island. He urged Allies not to allow Russia a de facto veto over Ukraine's NATO aspirations, arguing that this should be an issue between NATO and Ukraine only.

¶3. (C) The leaders made clear their hope that Allied Foreign Ministers would respond positively in December to the Ukrainian request to join NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP). Tymoshenko and Yatsenyuk urged Allies not to conflate MAP with actual membership.

¶4. (C) Yushchenko assured PermReps that Kyiv was committed to continuing its reform efforts, adding that Ukraine had increased its engagement in both the Intensified Dialogue and Annual Target Plan processes. Tymoshenko reinforced this point, noting that Ukraine was also moving to improve its interagency coordination on NATO issues through the creation of a commission chaired by DPM Nemyria (reftel). She also said that the current democratic government could provide the real reforms that would be needed to meet NATO's performance-based standards. On the other hand, Tymoshenko also agreed with NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer when he argued that Kyiv needed to devote more funding to defense reform efforts. Yushchenko said Ukraine was also committed to increasing its practical cooperation with NATO, noting that since the NATO Bucharest Summit in April it had moved forward with its offer to contribute to the NATO Response Force and had indicated its interest in participating in the UK-France helicopter initiative. He reminded Allies that Ukraine was the only NATO partner to contribute to all Alliance operations.

¶5. (C) Addressing the issue of low public support for NATO membership and the need to overcome lingering Soviet-era stereotypes of NATO, Yushchenko said that an information campaign was on track at USD 2 million a year (for five years) with 77 activities currently planned. Yushchenko argued that this campaign could be effective, noting that only three years ago the EU was not popular in Ukraine, but now it is a major trading partner. Tymoshenko agreed, pointing out that 70 percent of Ukrainians now support the EU and arguing that Ukrainian attitudes could similarly turn in favor of NATO. The President, Prime Minister, and Speaker all noted that any final Ukrainian decision on membership would come only after the issue had been submitted to a public referendum. As a result, public support clearly had to be built up before Ukraine could join the Alliance. Tymoshenko stressed, however, that low public support should not be a barrier to entry into the MAP process which is designed to help Ukraine on its reform path.

Tymoshenko: I Expect A Positive Outcome in December

¶6. (C) Tymoshenko sounded similar themes in her separate meeting with PermReps later in the day. When asked what her expectations were for NATO's December Foreign Ministerial, she said that she expected a positive decision on Ukraine's MAP application. In an attempt to silence those who doubted her personal commitment to obtaining MAP, she said that she stuck by her decision to co-sign a letter with Yushchenko and Yatsenyuk requesting MAP. The German PermRep was visibly unhappy.

¶7. (C) At the same time, Tymoshenko acknowledged the significant splits that existed in the country over NATO membership and said that an attempt to move to membership

before the country was ready would risk a territorial division of the country. She said that this was one reason why it was important to understand the difference between MAP and membership, adding that a positive decision on MAP in December would be another step in NATO assistance to Ukraine.

¶8. (C) Tymoshenko said that the "democratic team" had the ability to start real reforms in Ukraine and was committed to the goal of NATO integration. In contrast, the Party of Regions was opposed to NATO. She pointed out; however, that Party of Regions head Yanukovych had once supported NATO integration, arguing that his current opposition was politically motivated. She said that his former stance needs to be better understood by the Ukrainian public, adding that she often takes his former book to quote to people during her outreach in eastern Ukraine.

¶9. (C) The PM assured PermReps that Ukraine wanted a harmonious relationship with Russia, but stressed that Ukraine would make decisions based on its own interests. She said that Russia was subjecting Ukraine to anti-NATO propaganda. She said that the Ukrainian public was unaware of Russia's own robust cooperation with the Alliance, adding that this needs to be better publicized to counter Russian efforts to demonize cooperation with NATO. She thanked PermReps for engaging in outreach during the trip during which they could explain NATO to the public.

The NUC: Ukraine Will Do Anything to Achieve MAP in December

¶10. (C) PermReps heard similar themes when they met with Foreign Minister Ohryzko and Defense Minister Yekhanurov in the context of a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC). Ohryzko said that Ukraine's aim was well known--MAP in December--and added that Ukraine had made a geo-strategic

choice regarding Alliance membership. He went further, promising that Ukraine was willing to do anything to make sure that the first assessment of Ukraine in December by Allied Foreign Ministers would also be the last assessment. In an attempt to assuage some Allies' concerns, he noted that NATO Article 5 commitments regarding collective defense did not apply during the MAP process. He said that Ukraine understood that it needed to carry out additional reforms, but stressed that it also needed Alliance advice and assistance in those reforms and that MAP was the mechanism by which that advice and assistance could be best provided. He also said that in an effort to maintain good relations with Russian, Kyiv would consult regularly with Moscow on the NATO membership question. He said that three rounds of discussion had already been held, but without substantial result.

¶11. (C) Yekhanurov said that Ukraine was paying particular attention to the need to make the Ukrainian armed forces a professional force with modern weapons that are interoperable with NATO and able to meet NATO standards. He said that he expected Ukraine's defense budget would increase by 20 percent. He reiterated Ukraine's commitment to practical cooperation with NATO and pledged continued support to NATO operations, noting that Kyiv planned to increase its to 10 its contribution to the Alliance mission in Afghanistan. With regard to the U.S.-led NATO/PfP Trust Fund to destroy excess Ukrainian munitions, he expressed a desire to shift the destruction to larger caliber munitions--but added that Ukraine would keep its commitments.

The Rada: A Variety of Voices

¶12. (C) PermReps heard different perspectives on NATO-Ukraine relations when they met with the heads of parliamentary committees and political factions at the Verkhovna Rada. When Party of Regions Deputy Yefremov asked why there was such a rush to NATO when the polls clearly indicated the public was against it, Our Ukraine Deputies Tarsyuk (former FM) and Hrystenko (former MinDef) both noted that the Party of Regions had once been a strong supporter of NATO integration.

Party of Regions Deputy Kozhara conceded that a 2003 law supported by the Party of the Regions had called for Euro-Atlantic integration, but stressed that that same law had also called for good relations with Russia. BYuT Deputy Skill pointed out that the Communists and Vitrenko supporters were protesting the NATO visit, but that the Party of Regions was not joining them. (Note: PoR's Yanukovych was invited to the meeting, but did not attend).

¶13. (C) Our Ukraine's Zvarych argued that NATO integration would make democracy irreversible and provide Ukraine with security and stability. Arguing in favor of active non-alignment, the representative from the Lytvyn Bloc claimed that the 1994 Budapest Agreement in which Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons in exchange for security guarantees was sufficient. Skill disagreed, noting that Russia's signature on the Budapest Agreement did not stop Moscow actions with regard to Tuzla. Belgian PermRep made a useful intervention pointing out that neutrality had not worked out well for Belgium in the 20th century.

Outreach: Kharkiv

¶14. (C) Following the official meetings in Kyiv, PermReps traveled to three regional cities (Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Lviv) to engage in outreach and public diplomacy activities. DCM Olson traveled to Kharkiv, where he and other members of the North Atlantic Council met with the head of the regional administration; held a roundtable discussion with students, NGO representatives, and local officials at a local university; and were briefed on NATO Science for Peace and Security projects being conducted at the Kharkiv Institute for Single Crystals.

¶15. (C) While the head of the regional administration (a Presidential appointee) echoed the themes heard in Kyiv, the roundtable presented more extreme views. The several Communists in the group were very vocal in their opposition to NATO, accusing it of everything from bombing innocent civilians in Yugoslavia and being a party to the invasion of Iraq to the war in Vietnam. They also pointed out that the local council had passed a resolution declaring Kharkiv a NATO-free zone, at which point the deputy held of the regional administration (a nephew of President Yushchenko) noted that he had successfully appealed this resolution and he was sure that it would be declared illegal. At several points the Communists got into shouting matches with the pro-NATO participants in the room. PermReps maintained unity of messaging, and Spanish deputy PermRep delivered an unexpectedly strong speech on NATO as a global security provider.

¶16. (C) At the Institute for Single Crystals, PermReps were briefed on three projects funded by NATO through its Science for Peace and Security program, including one relating to Light Weight and Transparent Armours. The projects were notable politically for the fact that Russia was a collaborator in at least two of the projects, providing an opportunity to point out this area of joint NATO-Ukraine-Russia collaboration on defense-related technologies.

PermRep Messages

¶17. (C) PermReps sent generally consistent messages across the meetings. They stressed that the decision was for Ukraine alone as to whether or not NATO membership was in its interest and that Allies would not try and "force" Ukraine into NATO against the will of its people. On the other hand, they urged the government to fully fund and implement its public information campaign so that the Ukrainian public can make that choice based on the best available information. They also focused on the need for Kyiv to continue progressing along the path of reforms, while thanking Ukraine for its contributions to NATO operations.

¶18. (C) While some Allies--such as Estonia, Poland, Canada and the U.S.--were forward leaning with regard to the decision on MAP in December, others were more cautious. For example, France would only say that in December Ukraine's "concrete results" would be evaluated. Germany was by far the most negative. In the meeting NUC meeting, for example, the German PermRep seemingly walked back from the Bucharest decision that Ukraine "will" become a member)- as well as conflating MAP and membership--by arguing that Foreign Ministers in December would have to evaluate whether enlargement to Ukraine would improve the security of Europe as a whole. He clearly linked "European security" to the maintenance of the relationship with NATO. During the outreach trip he argued that it was impossible to have security in Europe without Russia and foolish to try to have it against Russia. He said that during this period of intensive engagement between NATO and Ukraine, NATO needed to have a new effort to engage Russia, building on previous forms of NATO-Russia cooperation.

OLSON